Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operator Training

What is it?
Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) operator training is transforming and modernizing to improve capabilities, and meet current and future full-spectrum aviation requirements. UAS Operator Training incorporates techniques and theories necessary for a two-man crew consisting of an Aircraft Operator (AO) and Payload Operator (PO) that includes instruction on advanced map reading, symbology, operational environment, stability and support operations, fundamentals of intelligence, collection and reconnaissance techniques, fratricide, tactical identification of equipment, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, airspace, weather, mission planning, flight physiology and aviation communications. Along with the current mission load overseas, lessons learned from recent operations are integrated into potential emerging missions and changing threats.

What has Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operator Training done?
UAS Operator Training continually adapts to meet national strategic roles and missions. Flying more than 1 million combat hours over the past nine years in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) demonstrates the validity of the requirement to transform and modernize, while maintaining a significant deployed presence. The Army continues to invest resources to modernize the fleet and improve capabilities with its recent selection and investment in the Extended Range/Multi-Purpose (ER/MP) UAS, Shadow RQ-7B UAS, and the Small Unmanned Aircraft System (SUAS). The success of these programs is evident with the accelerated expansion (Pre- Structure and Manning Decision Review (SMDR)) from the current capacity of 617 student seats per year to 638 in FY12. The growth of the Army Aviation institutional capacity shows the commitment to the future and synchronization of efforts from the United States Congress, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and Army/Industry teaming to meet scheduling and fielding in support of the Warfighter.

What continued efforts does Army Aviation have planned for the future?
From FY10 to FY12, the Army will begin to field the ER/MP, Gas Micro Air Vehicle (GMAV) and the Micro Air Vehicle (MAV) UAS systems. Army Aviation is working in concert with its sister services to develop concepts that will support the Future Force by developing Joint Service Support. Oversight of industry will be maintained to ensure program cost, schedule and performance measures are met. Additionally, the UAS fleet will provide safe and combat ready aircraft for present and future missions.

Why is this important to the Army and Army Aviation?
Recent events around the world have illustrated that Army Aviation continues to be a relevant and responsive member of the joint force's response to full-spectrum military operations from homeland defense and disaster relief, to peace enforcement and combat operations in support of Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO). To sustain this critical support to the Warfighter and our Nation, Army Aviation must continue to transform, modernize and station its units to maintain a modular, sustainable, deployable, and lethal force that can execute the full range of mission sets stateside and abroad (wasn't this used before? Maybe tailor a little more to UAS?).

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